

A new Disciphania (Menispermaceae) from French Guiana

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DISCIPHANIA (verosimiliter sect. Sarcostephana) UNILATERALIS
Barneby, sp. nov., a congeneribus omnibus foliorum
unilateraliter secus caulem dispositorum lamina
oblongo-elliptica 3--4-plo longiori quam latiori primo
intuitu diversa. -- FRENCH GUIANA. Trois Sauts: forêt
primaire, région de Zidock ville, 12.I.1975 (fr), Grenand
653. -- Holotypus, NY.

A small slender vine of virgin forest, glabrous throughout, the leaves all turned to one side of the weakly scandent canaliculate hornotinous stems; petioles 2--4 cm, twisted at both ends; leaf-blades membranous, when dry dull brownish-olivaceous, in outline oblong-elliptic 13--17 x 4--5 cm, 3--4 times as long as wide, at base broadly cuneate, at apex acuminate (the obtuse acumen 8--10 mm), from base weakly 5-nerved, the stronger (inner) lateral pair of nerves ascending through no more than 1/4 of blade, the midrib giving rise to + 8 pairs of major secondary nerves, the tertiary reticulation fine and lax, the ultimate areoles much > 1 mm diam; inflorescence ♂ unknown; inflorescence ♀: peduncle + 6 cm, twisted at both ends; spike + 20-flowered, the axis in fruit + 8 cm; flower unknown; drupe grapelike plumply ovoid-ellipsoid + 15--17 mm, the ripe exocarpic skin chocolate-brown, the mesocarp gelatinously juicy, the endocarp (of sect. Sarcostephana) in broad view 15 x 11 mm, its dorsoventral crests + 1 mm, its 3 latero-marginal wings 2--2.5 mm wide. -- N. V. (Wayapi): alasiku.

The genus Disciphania, instantly recognized in tribe Tinosporeae by its sessile flowers and peculiarly crested endocarp, is most highly developed in upper Amazonia and the Peruvian-Ecuadorian Andes (Barneby, 1970, p. 124--sequ.) and has not been recorded hitherto either from the Guianas or from northeastern Brazil. The discovery of a Disciphania on the upper Oiapoque river near 53° W., 2° N. is in itself a notable event and it can cause no surprise that the species is an undescribed one. So far as can be told from the fruiting specimen before me, D. unilateralis belongs probably to sect. Sarcostephana Barneby, but is unique in that group, as indeed in the whole genus, in its narrowly oblong-elliptic leaves which, by a twist of the petiole, are arranged unilaterally along the slenderly scandent stems.

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Literature Cited

Barneby, R. C. 1970. Revision of Neotropical Menispermaceae tribe Tinosporeae. Mem. N. Y. Bot. Gard. 20 (2): 81--158.